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AUTHOR Forrester, Donald W.
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ABSTRACT

Leadership Kennesaw, a 1-year program designed to cultivate an institutional perspective and the leadership potential of a select cross section of the faculty at Kennesaw State College, is described in this report. The leadership model used in developing this project was a successful concept long used by chambers of commerce to promote knowledgeable community leadership (Leadership Georgia, administered by the Business Council of Georgia). Monthly programs in Leadership Kennesaw focus on the nature of leadership, the challenges in higher education, the economic and political environment and institutional strategy. The results have been overwhelmingly positive in promoting increased understanding of the workings of the college, institutional change, and collegial perspectives. Participants provide regular evaluation of the program. Important values of such a faculty leadership development program include the following: tired faculty are revitalized; young or new faculty are quickly brought into campus activity; a sense of partnership with the administration and community is developed; and a valuable network of colleagues is developed. To be successful, such a program must be flexible, current, relevant to faculty needs, and faculty-guided. Its primary thrust must be professional, with human relations aspects included. (SM)

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LEADERSHIP KENNESAW

# KENNESAW STATE COLLEGE'S PROGRAM OF FACULTY LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

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THE CENTER FOR EXCELLENCE IN TEACHING AND LEARNING

Donald W. Forrester, Director

February 15, 1989

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## AASCU/ERIC Model Programs Inventory Project

The AASCU/ERIC Model Programs Inventory is a two-year project seeking to establish and test a model system for collecting and disseminating information on model programs at AASCU-member institutions--375 of the public four-year colleges and universities in the United States.

The four objectives of the project are:

- To increase the information on model programs available to all institutions through the ERIC system
- To encourage the use of the ERIC system by AASCU institutions
- To improve AASCU's ability to know about, and share information on, activities at member institutions, and
- To test a model for collaboration with ERIC that other national organizations might adopt.

The AASCU/ERIC Model Programs Inventory Project is funded with a grant from the Fund for the Improvement of Postsecondary Education to the American Association of State Colleges and Universities, in collaboration with the ERIC Clearinghouse on Higher Education at The George Washington University.

## ABSTRACT

Kennesaw State College took a successful concept long used by chambers of commerce to promote knowledgeable community leadership and adapted it to the collegiate setting for faculty development. Leadership Kennesaw provides a year-long program designed to cultivate an "institutional perspective" and the leadership potential of a select cross section of the faculty. Monthly programs focus on the nature of leadership, the challenges in higher education, the economic and political environment, and institutional strategy. The results have been overwhelmingly positive in promoting increased understanding of the workings of the college, institutional change, and collegial perspectives.


## INTRODUCTION

This document will include background information telling how and why Leadership Kennesaw came to be, a narrative description of the program, a qualitative assessment of the results, a schedule of the year's activities and some conclusions and recommendations as to the program's transferability to other institutions.

BACKGROUND

Kennesaw State College, nestled in the sprawling suburbs of northwest Atlanta, is a senior commuter college of 8,600. Its faculty, more than three-fourths of whom hold doctorates, is made up of highly motivated individuals, whose primary professional interest is teaching. Excellence in teaching is, after all, what has gained the twenty-five-year-old institution its reputation in the state of Georgia. Research, institutional service and professional growth are considered in matters of tenure and promotion, but good teaching is the college's sine qua non.

President Siegel saw in the faculty enormous leadership potential. In a millieu of effective teachers, a few good researchers, and a high level of institutional loyalty, it was apparent that a significant number of campus leaders had emerged through a process of natural selection. But there was a problem, and it was twofold. The existing leadership showed little institutional direction, and a vast untapped leadership potential lay beneath the surface.

The faculty had already been involved in a strategic planing process, and were ready to commit to the achievement of those goals. Those goals, however, had not yet been internalized to the point that a collective dream existed in the faculty psyche. A sense of cohesiveness was needed. In the words of James Kouzes and Barry Posner in The Leadership Challenge, the

president saw the need to "inspire a shared vision" and then "enable (the faculty) to act."

## DESCRIPTION OF THE PROGRAM

Leadership in higher education is a much-discussed topic among academic administrators. From presidents to department chairs, everyone seems interested (and rightly so) in improving personal leadership style. The presses respond with book after worthy book, each with its particular slant, each with its meaningful leadership axioms, each with its promise of improved leadership skills. Teaching faculty do not, for the most part, read these books. Leadership is, they say, the domain of the administration, not the faculty. Three years ago, President Betty Siegel, of Kennesaw State College, a thriving unit of the University System of Georgia, chose to challenge that belief. Her premise was simple. To be successful, every faculty member must be an effective leader--in the classroom, in the campus committee structure and in the community.

President Siegel broke with tradition by going outside the walls of academe for a leadership model--one which would be both inspirational and enabling. The Business Council of Georgia administers a program called Leadership Georgia, to which each year are nominated approximately sixty of the state's most promising people from business, the professions, religion, the

arts and volunteer agencies. They meet several times each year to become acquainted with key issues involving education, transportation, natural resources, the state's role in the international arena, ethical values and leadership styles. Several municipalities around the state have similar, though unrelated, programs. It seemed to be an ideal approach by which to build unity among a faculty, to provide them with much-needed information about the workings of the college and the University System of Georgia, to give them a continuing line of communication with the president and to help unleash their potential leadership.

Leadership Kennesaw, inaugurated in 1985, became the first faculty growth and development program of its type in the state of Georgia, and may be unique in higher education. Now in its fourth year of life, the program has "graduated" approximately twenty-five participants each year. Members are nominated by their chairs, deans, the president or colleagues who have been through the experience; or they may nominate themselves. The president makes the final selection, giving consideration to balance in areas of academic discipline, sex and race. The program is planned and administered by the Center for Excellence in Teaching and Learning, with the guidance of a committee consisting of Leadership Kennesaw alumni.

Eight sessions are held during the year--one each month from October through May. Leadership Kennesaw begins and ends

with a two-day retreat. The first is held in the north Georgia mountains, and stresses the importance of bonding and teamwork. Session two, a day-long activity held on campus, examines the personal dimensions of leadership, but also builds upon the team concept established a month earlier. Two later sessions explore the parameters of leadership in higher education, including the importance of leadership skills in the classroom and the committee meeting, as well as in administrative roles.

A college, especially one such as Kennesaw State College, does not operate apart from the larger community; so one session is devoted to familiarizing the members with the problems and opportunities of the area surrounding the college. The Cobb County Chamber of Commerce is one site visited. Here the group discovers the college's dependence upon the business and professional community, learns some of the expectations the area's citizens have of their college, and are provided an overview of service opportunities in the community. The day provides the opportunity to talk with black community leaders, to learn what part the college plays in the realization of their dreams and aspirations for their children.

Since Kennesaw is a tax supported institution, politics play a vital role in its funding. It is a role not generally understood by faculty. A visit to the state capital and dialogue with some of our state representatives proves extremely enlightening. This if followed by a session in the Office of the

University System of Georgia's Board of Regents, where more stark reality is discovered. The group finishes the day with a clearer understanding of why sometimes unpopular decisions--academic and fiscal--must be made at the college level.

In the practice of hiring minority faculty, particularly blacks, Kennesaw is on the leading edge among the units of the University System of Georgia, a fact in which the college takes great pride. White faculty and administrators tended to think all was well. "No," said black faculty members, "all is not well." Inequalities, perhaps unintentional ones, still existed. The air needed to be cleared. White faculty needed to raise their consciousness of the problems their black colleagues face in a mostly white college in a mostly white county. Leadership Kennesaw seemed the perfect pace to begin. The race relations session has become an annual part of the program, and is one of the most profound experiences of the entire year. A consultant is brought in, a black man, who is highly skilled at promoting deep and meaningful dialogue between blacks and whites. The participants leave with a greater understanding between the races. This segment of Leadership Kennesaw has been so successful, that the Board of Regents is considering using it as a model for a session to be conducted for the University System's 34 presidents.

Other sessions during the year allow the members to put into practice the concept of leadership within the group context.

At least three times a year, a block of time is set aside during which the participants grapple with real-life campus issues. More than a "gripe session," this allows the president the opportunity to feel the faculty pulse and to gain their insights. It is an acceptable means by which ideas and opinions may be passed from the faculty upward, without the paranoia-producing side effects of the campus grapevine.

Early in the year, in keeping with the philosophy of leadership through teamwork, the members choose a year-long group project. Currently one group is organizing a series of faculty dialogues called "Teacher Talks," during which important issues will be discussed. Another is exploring ways to teach, promote and model ethical behavior in the classroom. One group is setting up the vehicle by which faculty may conduct classroom level research on teaching effectiveness; another is devising a system of colleague consultation, whereby faculty may seek council regarding their effectiveness as teachers.

## RESULTS

Participants in Leadership Kennesaw provide regular evaluation of the program, which the director and the Steering Committee use to bring about improvements. The program enjoys the respect and enthusiastic support of most of the faculty and administration. A few nominees decline to participate each year,

the reason given most often being interference with classes. A very small percentage of those who participate find that the program does not fill their needs; but most give the program high marks. So popular has the program become, that modified versions of Leadership Kennesaw are now in place for students and non-teaching staff. Also sister institutions are beginning to ask for assistance in establishing similar programs.

Without a doubt, Leadership Kennesaw could not have been successful without one key ingredient. That is the total support and personal participation of the president and the academic vice president. Their presence at all meetings lends an importance to the program which could be achieved in no other way.

At the final retreat in May, members are asked to state the most important thing gained from the year's experience. At least half value the contacts made. The terms "collegiality" and "networking" are frequently heard. An appreciation for diversity and a valuing of differences in leadership styles are often mentioned as being important. Some value the opportunity to learn the college's administrative workings; others reveal the profound effect of the race relations session. Many cite the importance of new concepts of leadership, and growth of their own leadership styles. Underlying most statements is a strong sense of community, and a commitment to work together to achieve the goals of the institution.

LEADERSHIP KENNESAW SCHEDULE, 1988-89

| DATE | EVENT | LOCATION | FACILITATORS | SOCIAL |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 10/2/88<br>10/3/88 | Fall Retreat | Cohutta Lodge | J. Brodzinski<br>M. Matthews<br>G. Dorman | Lodge |
| 11/1/88 | Personal Dimensions of Leadership | Lutheran Church | G. Roberts | D. Forrester |
| 12/7/88 | Leadership and | Library 226-227 | K. Daw<br>N. King | A. Bairan |
| 1/25/89 | Community Outreach | Library 226-227 | J. Collier<br>P. Rhyne | G. Dorman |
| 2/23/89 | Politics/Board of Regents | State Capitol & Regents Office | E. Rugg<br>G. Beggs | None |
| 3/8/89 | Race Relations | Dede Yow's Cabin | A. Lester | Cabin |
| 4/11/89 | Leadership Action | Library 226-227 | G. Williams<br>B. Davis | |
| 5/21/89<br>5/22/89 | Spring Retreat | PineIsle | | Hotel |

## CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Borrowing a concept from chambers of commerce and applying it to academe presented a significant risk--but a risk that has proven well worth the taking. There is always a certain amount of danger involved when attempting to export a successful program from one campus to another, whose needs, expectations and general frame of reference may be quite different. However, the risk seems less great than the initial one. The attractiveness of the program has caused other arms of the college to initiate similar programs (student development and support staff). While these programs are still in the fledgling stage, they appear to have generated good results. Other colleges are inquiring about the possibility of similar programs on their campuses. Whether the program works elsewhere or not surely depends upon 1) the administration's commitment to support it, financially and philosophically, and 2) the faculty's acceptance of the concept. Some of the values of a faculty leadership development program are as follows:

1. Tired faculty are revitalized.
2. Young or new faculty are quickly brought into campus activity.
3. A sense of partnership with the administration is developed. (Warning: It is hard to imagine this program working where "administration by edict" is the style.)

4. A sense of partnership with the community is developed.
5. Faculty members are empowered to lead, in the classroom, the committee and in the community.
6. A valuable network of colleagues is developed.

It is apparent, after four years of Leadership Kennesaw experience, that the program, to be successful, must be flexible, current and relevant to faculty needs. It must be faculty-guided and supported by the administration. Its primary thrust must be professional, but the human relations aspects must not be overlooked. The atmosphere in which it operates must be open, friendly, candid and free of threat. Finally, there can be no hint of attempts at indoctrination; to the contrary, the diversity of individual participants must not only be respected but highly valued. With these stipulations, it is hard to imagine why such a program should fail on any campus.